

INFORMATION FOR BUSINESSES AND LICENSEES

As you may be aware, the English Defence League (EDL) have given notice of their intention to hold a demonstration in Luton town centre on Saturday 5 February. Subsequently another organisation, Unite Against Fascism (UAF), which is opposed to EDL, gave notice that they intend to hold a demonstration in Luton town centre on the same day.

Luton Borough Council and Bedfordshire Police are fully aware of the potential impact of any demonstrations on the local business community.

We are well equipped to deal with events like this and we are working together with other agencies to keep disruption to a minimum, where possible.

St Georges Square and Market Hill are the proposed locations for any demonstrations and clearly there will be significant disruption in these areas on the day.

However, we anticipate that businesses and taxi services throughout the town centre may face considerable disruption on the day.

Over the coming days, police and council officials will be visiting those businesses which we believe will be directly affected by the demonstrations to discuss the potential impact and what we can do together to minimise it.

Please see over leaf some questions and answers which you may find useful.

Q. Should I close my business on February 5?

A. This is a decision for individual businesses to make. Clearly there may be a great deal of disruption in the town but our intention is to help keep shops and businesses running as normal.

Q. What will the police be doing on the day?

A. Luton Borough Council and Bedfordshire Police have been working together to plan for this event to allow a peaceful protest. This will include a large number of uniformed and specialist officers being in the town to keep the public safe. Officers from Luton Borough Council such as youth workers, licensing and highways will be deployed according to the plans.

Q. How can I protect my business?

A. You can protect your business by taking sensible precautions and by reviewing your current security, CCTV capability and insurance. If you would like support with this, then you can contact Bedfordshire Police Crime Reduction Officers on 01234 841212 and Luton Borough Council Licensing Officers by email licensing@luton.gov.uk who will be willing to offer advice.

Q. What happens if my business is damaged by the protestors?

A. Any damage caused to businesses will be treated as a serious crime and investigated thoroughly to identify those responsible and bring them to account.

Q. How long will the protests last for?

A. It is expected that the protests will take place during the afternoon of Saturday February 5. However, there will be disruption before and after the event to allow assembly and dispersal. Taxi services and other forms of transport will be disrupted due to road closures and people should visit our websites for updates nearer the time: www.bedfordshire.police.uk or www.luton.gov.uk

Q. Why can't the police and council stop them from protesting?

A. We live in a democracy and the Human Rights Act affords people the right to a peaceful protest. The police and council are working closely together to ensure the protests on February 5 remain peaceful and create the least amount of disruption possible.

Q. Will Luton town centre be safe on February 5?

A. There will be a large number of police officers in the town to keep the public safe and minimise the impact on local people going about their daily business. Of course, disruption to businesses in the area of the protests and to some transport on the day is inevitable. However, we aim to ensure as little disruption as possible during the protests and a swift return to normality after the demonstrations have finished.

Q. What will happen if the protest isn't peaceful?

A. Bedfordshire Police's role is to allow a peaceful protest. If anyone commits a criminal offence or causes disorder or damage, they will be dealt with fairly but firmly. We will not tolerate acts of violence or damage.

Q. How do we contact the police if we need help on the day?

A. In the event of an emergency (for example a crime is taking place) please call 999. For all non-emergency queries please call 01234 841212, visit your local police station or stop an officer in the street.

If you would like to receive text messaging on the day to keep you up to date text the word POLICE to *88020 or switch your Bluetooth on.

*Texts to 88020 are charged at your standard network rate. Texts from this service to your phone are free.

